

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Acton of Acton Community Preservation Committee

**December 20, 2007
Acton Memorial Library**

Attending: Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ed Starzec, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Jon Benson, Ron Schlegel, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Walter Foster, Kristin Alexander (Planning Department), Anne Forbes (HDC Observer) and Steve Noone (FinCom Observer).

Ken Sghia-Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:40PM.

The minutes of the meeting of November 29, 2007 were approved as submitted.

Glenn Berger, Trustee of the Blue Bird Realty Trust, made the project application presentation for the restoration of Exchange Hall at 2 School Street in the South Acton Historic District. The Trust has owned the property since 1983. The application seeks \$231,948 in CPC funding for a restoration project. Exchange Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1986) and the Massachusetts Endangered Historic Resources Program (2000). The Acton Historic District Commission has determined that the "expansion and restoration of Exchange Hall" is appropriate and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project earlier this year.

It is the opinion of Town Counsel that the project application is eligible for funding under the "historic resources" section of the CPA subject to three conditions. The conditions are (i) that it is determined the project is functional for its intended use (e.g. complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building codes and federal standards for the treatment of historic properties); (ii) that the Blue Bird Realty Trust shall convey to the Town of Acton an acceptable historic preservation restriction; and (iii) that within the historic preservation restriction or other enforceable instrument the Blue Bird Realty Trust convey to the Town of Acton the right to use function space in Exchange Hall one Monday per month for 15 years "or such other period as the CPC may specify". Conditions (ii) and (iii) were proposed by Mr. Berger in his letter to the Committee of December 10, 2007 supplementing his application.

Mr. Berger explained that the renovation is intended to save a piece of Acton's history and for Exchange Hall to become an active and vibrant commercial entity in Town. The plan is for Mr. Berger to spend \$1,000,000 to restore the exterior of the building and for the necessary site work. It would be up to the expected tenant to spend an additional \$1,000,000 to renovate and build out the interior creating an outdoor café, restaurant and function hall. Mr. Berger's hope is the completed project would be comparable with Concord's Colonial Inn and Sudbury's Wayside Inn.

The Committee wants after these many years for the renovation to go forward but has serious concerns about its economic feasibility. Following extensive questioning by several Committee members, the initial consensus is the Committee will not commit CPA funds of the magnitude sought until it is known the project, exterior and interior, is funded and will be going forward. It should be noted that Mr. Berger was very open to the concerns expressed by Committee members. An Exchange Hall site visit by the Committee is scheduled for Saturday, January 5 at 9AM.

The Committee voted its approval of Ken's memorandum to the Board of Selectmen in support of the Selectmen's salary parity proposal for Town employees.

Pending a further explanation from the Temporary Town Manager, the Committee deferred on John Murray's recommendation that 5% of CPA revenues for 2008 (approximately \$68,621.00) be appropriated to pay to the Town for administrative support of the CPA program.

The Committee briefly discussed Nancy's Tavernier's email for a moveable/floating set of signs to showcase CPA funding of projects around town. This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 3, 2008 at 7:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM.

Jon Benson